A Rural Survey in Tennessee

MADE BY THE

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH AND COUNTRY LIFE

OF THE

BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE U. S. A.

Warren H. Wilson, Ph.D., *Superintendent*
Anna B. Taft, *Assistant Superintendent*
156 Fifth Avenue, New York City

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U.S.A. Board of Home
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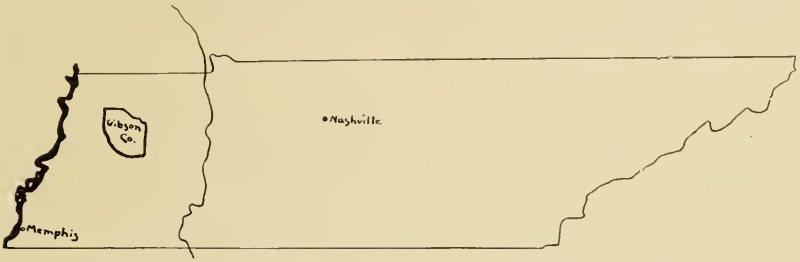
The Field Work of this investigation was done by Anton T. Boisen

A WHOLESOME FORM OF CHILD LABOR

A Tennessee Survey

Within the past seven years the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has entered the South. The Cumberland Union opened up to it this new field. As a result, new responsibilities have been placed upon it and new and perplexing problems have arisen. The present survey is a step in the direction of assuming that responsibility and solving the problems which it presents. It has been undertaken for the purpose of determining the conditions in the country communities



MAP NO. I OUTLINE OF TENNESSEE SHOWING LOCATION OF GIBSON COUNTY

of a typical county of West Tennessee, to discover what are the present needs of such communities, whether or not these needs are now being met by the church and other agencies, and finally to offer constructive suggestions designed to make the church work more efficient. This work was undertaken entirely without any sectarian motive, and was conducted without regard to denominational lines. It is not an attempt to advance the interests of the Presbyterian Church, but rather to determine how the Presbyterian Church may best coöperate with the other denominations at work in this field in the performance of the function for which the Church was founded and for which alone it should be maintained—that of helping men to live together in loyalty to each other and to their common Father in Heaven.

METHOD

The field work for this survey was done in the fall of 1911 and occupied two months. The investigator drew freely upon all published reports, county records, and visited in person all parts of the county. There were three main steps in the process of collecting the field data. In the first place the investigator sought out some man in each neighborhood who was especially well informed and public-spirited. From him he obtained

such general information as could be given without guess work or random generalization. He also asked him to locate on a map the churches, schools and stores. He then visited twenty or thirty different families living in that community, to make a more detailed inquiry. These two methods, which together gave him an accurate general knowledge of the county, were later supplemented by the "Sample Plot" method used by many timber cruisers. Certain neighborhoods or "Sample Plots" were chosen for intensive study. These were carefully distributed over the county to avoid the danger of a selective bias. In all, twenty-one of them were studied, covering 9.1 per cent. of the total area of the county and including 607 country families.

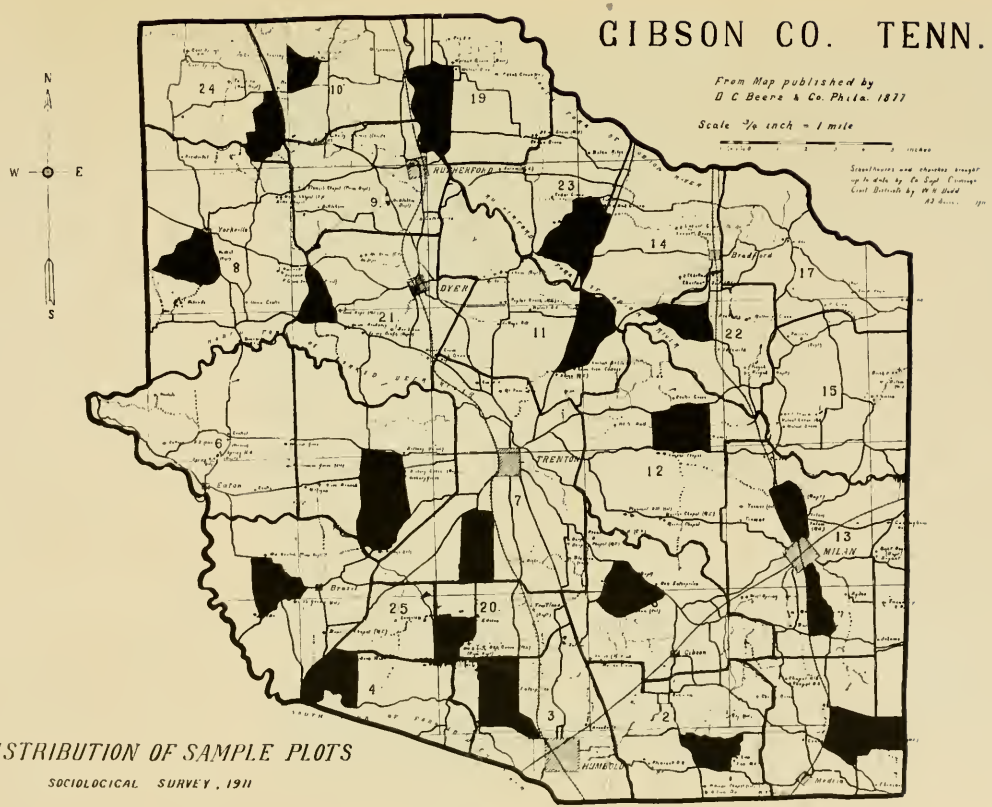
Throughout the work the investigator received the hearty coöperation of all with whom he came in contact and carried away with him very delightful remembrances of the far-famed Southern hospitality.

Topography and Resources

Gibson County, which was selected as the type county, after consultation with men most familiar with West Tennessee, is located near the northwestern corner of the State, separated from the Mississippi River by only one county, and from the State of Kentuckty by only one county. The land is level to rolling. The mean elevation is perhaps 300 feet above sea level. The maximum difference in elevation is hardly more than 50 feet. There are no mineral resources and no water power. Several lazy streams cross the county. In the winter these overflow their banks and their course is marked by swamps of gum and cypress from one-fourth to one-half mile wide. Most of the merchantable timber is culled out and engineers are now hard at work on plans for draining the swampy areas. The uplands were originally covered with a splendid forest of oak, yellow poplar, hickory, ash, basswood and walnut, but nine-tenths of this has been cleared away and the remainder is poorly cared for. Agriculture is therefore the chief source of income, and the deep, fertile alluvial soil is suited for widely diversified farming.

Gibson County is not, however, exclusively an agricultural county. It is fortunate in having three good railroads located within its border and largely on account of the advantages thus afforded, manufacturing has assumed some importance. There are approximately 22 cotton gins, 16 saw mills, 13 roller and grist mills, 1 large box and basket factory, 1 large cotton mill, 1 large cotton seed mill, and 10 other manufacturing plants. These manufacturing establishments are engaged in converting the products of farm and forest into a form available for use. The raw material is for the most part secured from within the county, although in the case of the box and basket factory in Humboldt and certain of the roller mills, much of it is shipped in. Gibson County was formerly an

MAP NO. II



DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE PLOTS

SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY, 1911

A VIRGIN FOREST

important lumbering center, but the lumber produced annually is not now sufficient to supply the local demand. The amount of wealth annually brought into Gibson County each year through its manufacturing industries may be roughly placed at $5,000,000. Farming is, however, the chief source of wealth. Not only do the manufacturers depend upon it for most of the raw material, but it brings into the county the bulk of the money which supports the population. Table I shows the amount and value of the various farm products exported annually.

TABLE I. — AMOUNT AND VALUE OF FARM PRODUCTS, EXPORTED FROM COUNTY

	Amount	Value
Cotton	35,950 bales	$1,510,000
Strawberries	204,000 crates	310,000
Tomatoes	632 cars	268,000
Miscellaneous vegetables	150 cars	75,000
Poultry	7,500 coops	60,000
Eggs	20,000 cases	120,000
Horses and mules	625 head	75,000
Cattle	3,000 head	120,000
Hogs	1,500 head	40,000
Total	.....	$2,578,000

Besides these crops, which are the source of the cash income, large quantities of corn are produced throughout the county, and wheat is grown in the northern parts. The corn goes chiefly into meat and horse power, and the wheat is all required for home consumption. In fact, a considerable amount of wheat is imported.

Computations on tenure of farm property from the 572 farms included in the sample plots show that 402 of these farms are operated by the owners. The variations in size are shown in Table II.

TABLE II.—VARIATION IN SIZE OF FARMS

Area in Acres	Number of Farms	Per Cent. of Total Number	Total Acreage	Per Cent of Total Area
20 or less	29	7.2	440	1.3
21–40	86	21.4	2,920	9.1
41–80	148	36.8	8,977	27.9
81–160	109	27.1	12,218	38.0
161–240	23	5.7	4,499	14.0
Over 240	7	1.8	3,095	9.7
Total	402		32,149	

Average area of farm, 80 acres.

Besides the 402 farmers who own and operate their own farms, there are 170 tenants. Of the families living in the county 70 per cent. are farm owners. Table III shows the number of each class of tenants:

TABLE III.—TENANTS AND CROPPERS

	Number	Number Renting from Absentee Owners	Total Acreage Rented from Absentee Owners
Cash-tenants	50	34	2,461
Share-tenants	52	20	1,348
Share-croppers	68	7	250
Total	170	61	4,059

Among the tenants 63 per cent. rent land from neighboring farmers. This land is in many cases under the direct supervision of the owner, who designates what crops are to be raised, and sees to it that the soil does not become too much worn out. In many cases the renters, although retaining their independence, are thus virtually hired men, who are paid in produce instead of in cash. This is particularly the case with the "share-cropper," who owns neither land nor tools, but has tools, horses and seed furnished by the owner of the land. The cropper as a rule cultivates from 20 to 30 acres, and gives half the produce to the owner. Most of the croppers are negroes. The "share-tenant" or "renter," who furnishes his own tools and horses, pays to the owner one-third of the corn and one-fourth of the cotton. The cash tenant pays usually $4 an acre. There are only 10 hired men. Their wages are from 75 cents to $1.00 a day and keep. Table IV shows the proportion of negroes and whites engaged in the different classes of farming.

TABLE IV.—PROPORTION OF NEGROES AND WHITES ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT CLASSES OF FARMING

Class of Farmers	White		Negro	
	Number	Per Cent. of Total	Number	Per Cent. of Total
Owners	359	80.1	43	32.7
Cash-tenants	33	7.3	17	12.7
Share-tenants	25	5.6	27	20.1
Share-croppers	25	5.6	43	32.1
Hired men	6	....	4	3.0
Total	448		134	

Total amount of land owned by whites, 34,403 acres; by negroes, 2,184 acres.

Methods of Farming

As a rule, the Gibson County farmer is not as progressive as the average American farmer. This is shown particularly in the lack of labor-saving

machinery. Gang plows, binders, etc., are not in evidence. Cotton and corn are the chief crops, and 11 acres of cotton or 20 acres of corn are considered a one-man crop. Most of the work in the cotton-fields is done by hand. The single-handed farmer will usually put in only 5 or 6 acres of cotton and 10 or 12 acres of corn, for they are competing crops and require attention at the same time. Most farmers, however, put in more and depend upon the help of wife and children, or of hired hands. It is a common sight to see whole families working together in the cotton fields.

The treatment of the land is improving. Many acres which were once "cottoned-out" are now productive again. The use of clover, cow-peas and barnyard manure is chiefly responsible for this. The fact that this county is not important as a stock-raising section makes the proper rotation of crops the most important means of maintaining the fertility of the soil. A rotation often practised is cotton or corn (2 or 3 years), wheat (1 year), clover (2 years.) The majority of farmers, however, still make no pretense of rotating their crops and plant cotton or corn for years in succession on the same ground. In truck gardening fertilizers are used.

A serious matter in some sections is the washing away of the soil. This occurs chiefly with heavy clay soil on hillsides that have been exposed by cultivation.

The Truck Growers and Their Association.—Most of the truck gardening is done within three or four miles of some railroad shipping point. This business is naturally a coöperative undertaking. It does not pay

AN EXAMPLE OF SOIL-WASHING

where only a few are engaged in it. There must be enough strawberry and tomato raisers to make it possible to send out the produce in carload lots each day. This fact and the need of eliminating the excessive profits of the middleman have led to the formation of the Fruit Growers' Association, the function of which is to handle and market the produce. This Association has not been very successful. In some cases the officers have been suspected of making excessive profits. The members themselves have not been loyal to their association, but have sold to outside buyers whenever they offered better prices, which they have done in many instances in order to put the Association out of business.

The Farmers' Union.—The same difficulty in organizing the farmers has been met in other fields than in the truck-growing business. The Farmers' Union was organized with special reference to the cotton grower's interests, and once had its locals all over the county, and owned and operated at least two cotton-gins. This is now in a decadent condition. Of the 31 or more locals which flourished a few years ago 13 are now extinct, and only 3 are in a really vigorous condition. One of the cotton-gins has passed into the hands of private owners. The sample-plot figures show that out of 441 farmers, 127 are nominally members of the Farmers' Union. There are, however, devoted Farmer Union men in Gibson County who have served the cause faithfully and, in spite of the waning of the initial enthusiasm the Farmers' Union is still a force for good, not only economically but also socially and morally.

Need of Organization.—The need for organization among the farmers is already apparent here. Most of the farmers recognize it, but they simply fold their hands and say, "It isn't possible." This need was forcibly driven home in the fall of 1911, when a cotton bale, which the year before sold for $75, sold for only $45. Many farmers attempt to meet this fall in price by holding their cotton. The investigator counted hundreds of bales in the open, exposed to rain and dust, held for a higher price. Whatever the effect upon the price, the quality of the cotton would certainly deteriorate. The great need is for concerted action on the part of the farmers. Their inability to organize successfully places them at the mercy of those who buy and those who sell.

The over-multiplication of stores and banks and trading places is shown in Map 3. These stores employ altogether about 796 people, and support about 2,500 dependents. In other words, 6 per cent. of the population, or one family out of seventeen, is supported by keeping store, and if we add to these the others who are engaged in trading, the commercial travelers, the peddlers, the agents, the commission men, etc., the total will be close to 7 per cent. It is clear that this is a larger number than is necessary to do the business, and a large porportion of the wealth that the farmer earns goes to support them.

AN EXPERIMENT IN COÖPERATION—COTTON-GIN OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE FARMERS' UNION

SPECULATING IN COTTON

A HERALD OF THE NEW ORDER

Means of Communication

Gibson County has three railroads, the Illinois Central giving it an outlet to Chicago, the Mobile & Ohio to St. Louis and the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis to Memphis and Nashville. The most inaccessible farm is not more than ten miles from some railroad station.

There are no graveled or macadamized roads in the county, and there is no stone with which such roads could be built. There are, however, no bad grades and dragging and scraping helps to keep them in fair shape.

Telephone lines run through the county, but only 208 out of 503 white families had telephones. None of the negro families has a telephone.

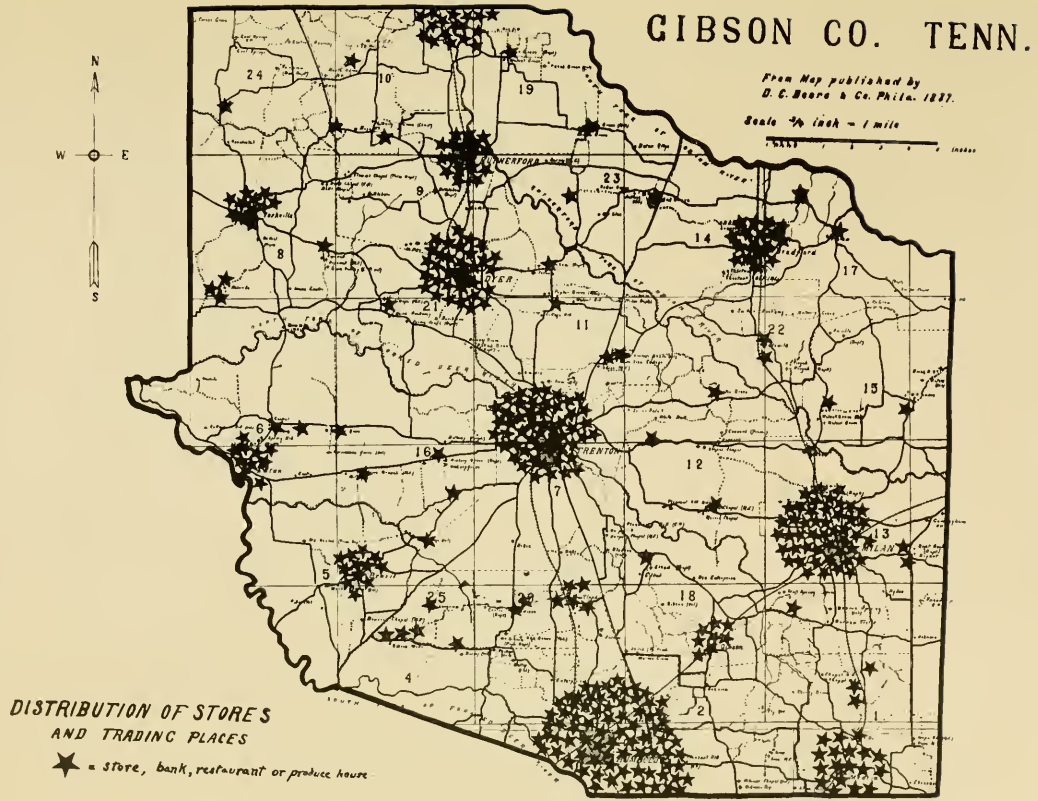
There are 80 rural routes in the county and 90 per cent. of the farmers have free delivery.

POPULATION

According to the census reports, the population of Gibson County in 1910 was 41,629, in 1900, 39,408. There has been, therefore, an increase of 2,221 during the last ten years. The increase was shared alike by town and country. The total population of the towns increased from 10,600 in 1900 to 11,429 in 1910, a net gain of 829, or 7.8 per cent., that of the country districts from 28,800 in 1900 to 30,200 in 1910, a net gain of 1,400, or 4.8 per cent.

The town population includes eleven towns ranging in size from 3,600 to 200. Six towns have over 800 inhabitants. The density of

MAP NO. III


GIBSON CO. TENN.
From Map published by
D. G. Beers & Co. Phila. 1877.
Scale 1/4 inch = 1 mile
N
W
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S
DISTRIBUTION OF STORES
AND TRADING PLACES
= store, bank, restaurant or produce house

population in the country districts is 52 per square mile. Gibson County is, therefore, thickly settled. Table V gives the population of the towns in Gibson County with more than 200 inhabitants.

TABLE V.—POPULATION OF TOWNS

	1910	1911
Humboldt	3,446	2,866
Trenton	2,402	2,328
Milan	1,605	1,682
Dyer	1,166	1,204
Kenton	815	*
Rutherford	766	677
Bradford	*400	*
Medina	320	*
Yorkville	*300	*
Brazil	*250	*
Gibson	233	*
Total	11,703	10,918

* Not reported separately in census.

The original settlers came chiefly from North Carolina and Virginia, and are largely of English and Scotch-Irish descent, with an admixture of Germans and Irish. During the past fifteen years there has been no important new tide of immigration. An analysis of the sample plot figures shows out of 517 country families only 19 or 3.6 per cent., that have moved in from outside of West Tennessee. Of these 7 came from Middle Tennessee, 3 from Alabama, 2 each from Missouri, Indiana and Illinois and 1 each from North Carolina, Arkansas and East Tennessee. It will be seen, then, that practically the entire population of the country districts are native Southerners. What is true of the country districts is substantially true of the towns. The white population of Gibson County is, therefore, of unmixed American blood of the best quality. The absence of immigration has, however, this effect: It shuts in the people of the county from contact with people of different training and modes of thought. This tends to make the people less progressive.

Locally there has been some shifting of population. Of these same 517 families 194 were newcomers in their immediate neighborhoods, having moved in within the last fifteen years.

The Drift from the Farm

There does not seem to be any widespread tendency to leave the farm in this county. In 19 neighborhoods, with 517 families in all, only 47 farm owners (9.1 per cent. of the total number) had left within the last ten years; 26 of these had gone to town, and 21 had taken farms in other places. Of those who went to town, 10 had retired on account of

advancing age, 9 were engaged in the mercantile business, 1 had left to educate his children, 1 was a carpenter, 1 a miller, 2 had left on account of ill-health and 2 were "loafing."

Of the 21 who are still farming, 17 had merely bought other farms in the neighborhood, 3 had sought cheaper lands in Texas, and 1 had gone to Arkansas. It should be noted that no account is taken here of the naturally shifting tenant class.

Table VI shows the occupation of 200 country boys, who have grown up in the same neighborhood in the last ten years, and are now between twenty and thirty years old.

TABLE VI.—OCCUPATION OF 200 COUNTRY BOYS

	Number	Per Cent. of Total Number
Farmers	145	72.5
Merchants	16	8
Laborers	15	7.5
Teachers	8	4
Railroad men	5	2.5
Mechanics	3	1.5
Traveling men	3	1.5
Manufacturers	2	1
Ministers	2	1
Doctors	1	.5
Total	200	

Table VII shows the occupation of 159 girls who have also grown up in these neighborhoods and are now of the same age.

TABLE VII—OCCUPATIONS OF 159 COUNTRY GIRLS NOW BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY YEARS OLD

Occupation	Number	Per Cent. of Total Number
Farmers' Wives	86	54.1
Wives of men in other occupations	21	13.2
At home	38	23.9
Teaching	9	5.7
Clerks in stores	2	1.2
Students	3	1.9
Total	159	

These figures show a healthy preference for the country. The number going to the towns involves no excessive drain upon the country neighborhoods.

Occupation

The occupation of the people in Gibson County is shown in Table VIII.

A Crop of Farm Boys

in Gibson County, Tenn.

200 Country Boys now between 20 and 30 yrs. old

145 have stayed on the Farm
55 have left the Farm

16 are merchants
15 are laborers
8 are teachers
5 are railroadmen
3 are mechanics
3 are traveling men
2 are manufacturers
2 are ministers
1 is a doctor

CHART I.

A Crop of Farm Girls

in Gibson County, Tenn.

159 Girls Now Between 20 and 30 Years Old

107 are Married

86 are farmers' wives
21 have left the farm

52 are Single

38 are at home
9 are teaching
2 are clerks in a store
3 are students

CHART II.

TABLE VIII.—NUMBER OF WORKERS AND DEPENDENTS IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Number	Number Dependents	Per Cent. of Total Number
Farmers	7,000	31,000	74.4
Manufacturers	900	3,000	7.3
Tradesmen	900	2,900	7.0
Laborers	300	1,900	2.1
Mechanics	200	700	1.7
Railroad employees	200	600	1.4
Mail clerks and carriers	100	350	.8
Teachers	234	600	1.4
Doctors	90	360	.9
Ministers	42	160	.4
Lawyers	30	120	.3
Unclassified	....	960	2.3

Attention should be drawn again to the large proportion represented in the tradesmen class, one family out of 17. Of the boys who leave the farm the largest per cent., 27 per cent., go into business, likewise of the farmers who move to town, and yet there are already more storekeepers than are necessary to do the business. The result is not only the inevitable failure of many who make this venture, but more serious still from the standpoint of the economist is the great waste of human energy involved. In the professional class are included 85 doctors and dentists, 30 lawyers, 32 ministers and 100 teachers. The proportion represented in some of these professions seems large. There must be many lawsuits or else very high fees must be charged to support one lawyer to every 440 families, and so with the seventy-odd physicians.

Education

The educational advantages of the heads of the families now living in the 21 neighborhoods studied is shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX.—EDUCATION OF HEADS OF FAMILIES

Highest School Attended	Number of Persons	Per Cent. of Total
College	9	1.9
High School	21	4.4
Country School—Secondary	210	44.4
Country School—Primary	198	41.8
None—illiterate	35	7.5
Total	473	

Of those who had had some college training, 6 are doctors and 1 is a minister. The percentage of college-trained men in the country districts

of the county as a whole will not be so large as this, for there is only one country minister in the county and only 10 country doctors.

Table X shows the educational advantages of the 200 country boys who have grown up in the neighborhoods, studied, and are now between twenty and thirty years of age.

TABLE X.—EDUCATION OF COUNTRY BOYS

Highest School Attended	Those Who Have Stayed on the Farm		Those Who Have Left the Farm	
	Number	Per Cent. of Total	Number	Per Cent. of Total
2d Grade or less	4	2.7	6	11.1
3d to 5th Grades	37	25.3	10	18.5
6th to 7th Grades	64	43.8	12	22.2
8th Grade	25	17.2	4	7.4
High School	14	9.6	14	25.9
College	1	.7	6	11.1
Professional School	0	.0	2	3.2
Agricultural School	1	.7	0	....
Total	146		54	

Table XI gives the corresponding figures for the girls in the same neighborhood.

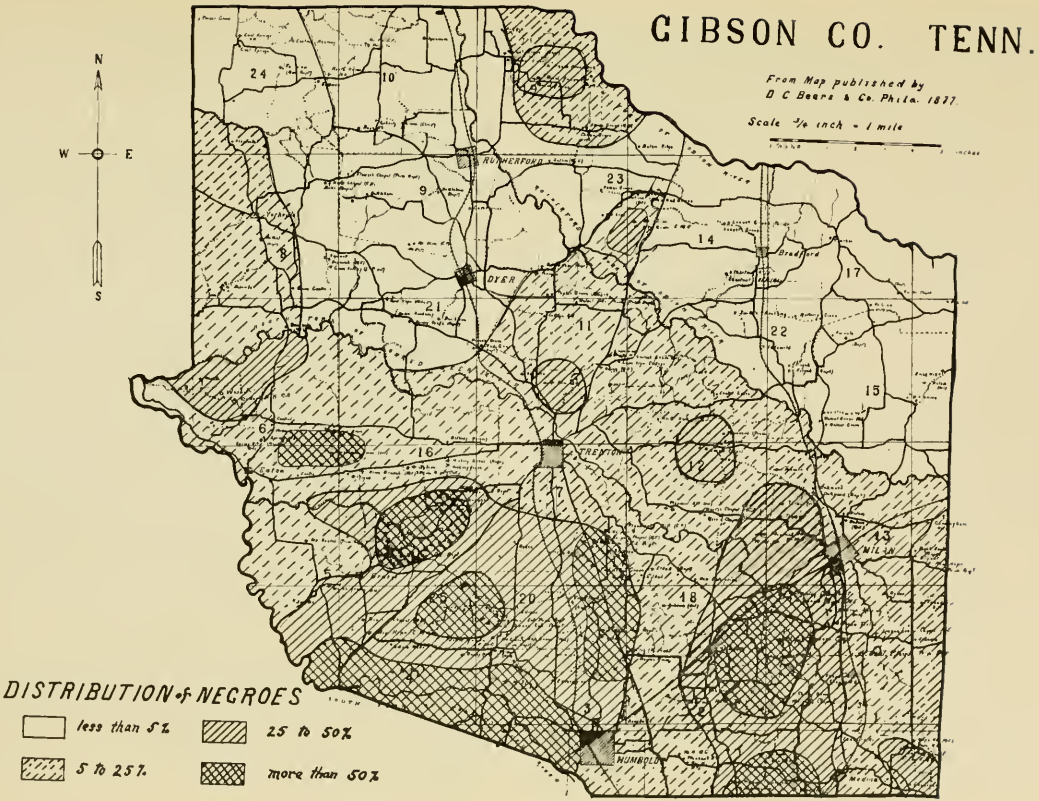
TABLE XI.—EDUCATION OF COUNTRY GIRLS

Highest School Attended	Wives of Farmers		Wives of Men in Other Occupations		Girls Who are Supporting Themselves		Girls at Home	
	No.	P. C.	No.	P. C.	No.	P. C.	No.	P. C.
2d Grade or less	..	....	..	....	..	..	..	..
3d to 5th Grades	12	14.4	3	14.3	..	..	10	28
6th to 7th Grades	34	41.0	6	28.6	..	..	10	28
8th Grade	32	38.5	7	33.3	2	17	13	36
High School	5	6.0	4	19.0	6	50	3	8
College	..	....	1	4.8	3	25	..	..
Professional School	..	....	..	....	1	8	..	..
Total	83		21		12		36	

Attention should be called here to the higher average education of the girls. Of the total number of girls 52 per cent. went through the Eighth Grade, or beyond, as against 33.5 per cent. of the boys.

Attention should also be drawn to the fact that the education of the young men who stayed on the farm is inferior to the education of those who have left. Of the latter 41 per cent. have gone beyond the Eighth Grade, as against 11 per cent. of the former. On the other hand, of those who left 30 per cent. did not go beyond the Fifth Grade, while only 28 per cent. of those who remained did not go beyond this grade. The great

MAP NO. IV


GIBSON CO. TENN.
From Map published by
D C Beers & Co. Phila. 1877
Scale 1/2 inch = 1 mile
N
W
E
S
DYER
TRENTON
HUMBOLDT
Bradford
DISTRIBUTION of NEGROES
less than 5%
25 to 50%
5 to 25%
more than 50%

body of those who remained on the farm, 61 per cent., belong in the class which dropped out somewhere between the Fifth and Eighth Grades, while only 30 per cent. of those who left fall in the same class. Thus the best educated and the poorest educated tend to leave the farm, while those with the average education remain. It would not be fair to say that the boy who goes beyond the Eighth Grade is necessarily superior to the boy who drops out before he reaches this grade, but the probabilities are that among those who do best in their school work are included the best minds and the most of those who dream dreams and have high ideals and a large vision of the future. Thus the country districts are losing their best and their poorest, and are retaining those of mediocre ability.

Defectives

Out of 340 families the investigator was told of 8 consumptives, 3 feeble-minded, 5 insane, 1 epileptic, 1 deaf and dumb, 1 blind, 3 cripples, 7 toughs, 17 drinking men and 1 loose woman.

The Negroes

Gibson County has, indeed, no immigrant problem, but it has the great problem of the South, the negro problem. It is not the special purpose of this report to investigate the negro problem. The investigator, born in the North, is no more than an observer of the negro. "It is our problem," the Southerner says, and the solution of it obviously must come through the Southern people themselves. However, an investigation of the social condition in this county which leaves the negro out of account is no investigation at all.

In all, the negroes constitute 28 per cent. of the population, or about 11,000 people. According to the school enumeration, the proportion of negroes in the county is decreasing. Of the total number of children of school age only 25 per cent. are negroes, as against the 28 per cent. for the total population.

There is said to be a general tendency among the negroes to move to town. Sixty per cent., however, still live in the open country. For the most part, both in town and country, they live in settlements of their own. Some civil districts have no negroes at all. Map No. 4 shows the distribution of the negro population within the county.

The negroes work as farmers, as laborers in factory and shop, and at odd jobs. Outside of the laboring classes there are 45 teachers, 10 ministers, 1 or 2 doctors, and perhaps a dozen storekeepers. Forty per cent. of the negroes in neighborhoods studied are land owners, although in many cases their farms are heavily mortgaged. As a laborer the negro earns low wages, from 75 cents to $1.25 a day. This cheap negro

"JES' GROWIN' UP"

AT EVENTIDE

labor keeps down the wages of the white laborer. It is also one explanation of the comparative lack of labor-saving machinery in this region.

About 66 per cent. of the negroes can read and write. The illiterate negroes are largely the older ones, who had no opportunity to learn when they were young.

The negroes live for the most part in small houses of less than three rooms, generally unpainted. Many of the negro settlements are back from the main highway. Some of these can be reached only after opening a number of gates. The average size of family for 84 families on which figures were secured was 4.8.

Some of the negroes are guilty of petty thieving, but for the most part they seem quiet and orderly. "Every nigger gets drunk" and "Every nigger steals," the investigator was told by more than one white neighbor, but when pinned down and asked in regard to particular negroes, "Did you ever know of this man being drunk?" "Did you ever know him to steal?" the charge in many cases fell flat.

THE HOME

Gibson County has never had large plantations. The small farmer has occupied the land, and it is he who has built the houses. The prevailing type of house is a long, low building with two rooms in front and a dining-room and kitchen, separated by an open vestibule in the rear. Occasionally the vestibule runs the other way, separating the two front rooms. There are no modern conveniences, but almost invariably you find one luxury, the open fireplace. The genuine, old-fashioned fireplace, which burns real wood and creates an atmosphere of dreamy charm and romance, all in keeping with the delightful Southern hospitality that you find there. Practically without introduction, the investigator was received over night into fourteen of these homes. Only twice was he turned away, each time with good reason, and only twice would his host consent to take any pay.

The average size of family is 4 5-10. Family affection is strong. "The fact that agriculture is still a family industry, where the work and the home life are not divorced, and where all the members participate in the common toil for the support of the home, gives a natural basis for a type of family life which it is very difficult to maintain in the city," says Professor Carver. Nowhere is this truth more apparent than here, where the whole family not only coöperate, but also actually work together out in the cotton-fields. Even little children, six or seven years old, can make themselves very useful picking cotton. Children are therefore an economic asset in any country family. This is perhaps the reason why the average family is larger here than it was in Missouri.

A GIBSON COUNTY FARMHOUSE

This type of child labor is not an unwholesome one, for parents and children and neighbors and neighbors' children work together out in the open air. The lessons learned here, and at chore time, are not the least valuable part of the farm boy's education. School is supposed to let out during cotton-picking time, from the middle of September until the middle of November, so as not to interfere with what is really an economic necessity. Sometimes, however, the cotton is not all picked when school begins; in this case the average attendance at school is very low. As late as November 24 the investigator visited one schoolhouse which enrolled normally 130 pupils, and found only 20 present. "The cotton is not picked yet," the teacher explained, and across the road was good evidence of this—a farmer and four flaxen-haired youngsters, hard at work, in their cotton-patch.

Diagram No. 1 shows the age of marriage for 193 young people included in the sample plots.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Centers of Informal Meeting

The country store plays its usual important role in bringing men together informally. There are 45 of these scattered through the county. It is here that the farmers meet each other most frequently, and swap

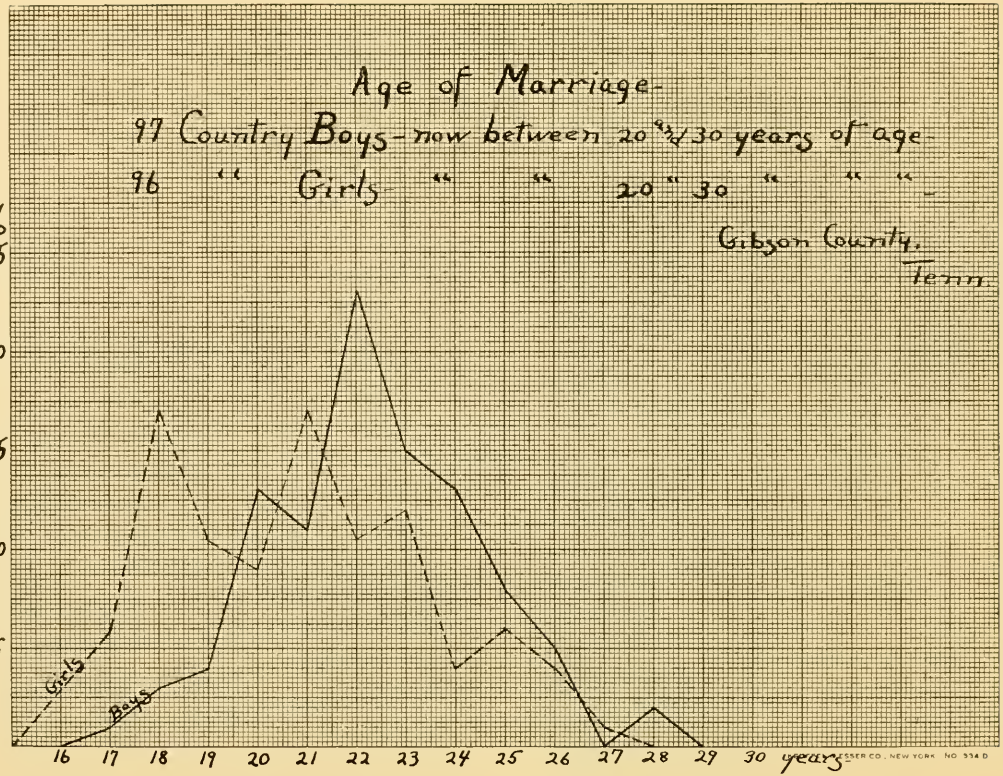

Age of Marriage-
97 Country Boys - now between 20 & 30 years of age-
96 " Girls - " " 20 " 30 " " " -
Gibson County, Tenn.
%
25
20
15
10
5
Girls
Boys
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 years
KESSLER CO., NEW YORK. NO. 334 D

DIAGRAM NO. I

yarns and exchange views on the crops, on the weather, on politics and on religion. The stores of town and village are also frequent meeting places, especially on Saturday afternoon, when farmers and farmers' wives and children come in large numbers. County Court Day, the first Monday in each month, has also become an important feature of country life. Farmers from all over the county come in to swap horses and mules and meet friends. The investigator knew nothing of the custom, when one beautiful first Monday in November he started in the country on a tour of investigation. He did not know there were so many people in the county as he saw on the road that morning. When he called at the homes of the men whom he wanted to see he found none of them at home. The whole countryside was deserted by its men-folk. The women had generally stayed at home.

Politics

Gibson County, like most of the South, is strongly Democratic. The sway of tradition is very strong and men do not readily break across party lines. In the last State election, however, when the temperance question was involved, many men who had never in their lives voted anything else than the straight Democratic ticket violated all precedent and voted for a Republican governor. The investigator talked with one such man, a fine old Confederate soldier. He seemed to be a little doubtful as to whether he had done right, but on the whole he thought he had. With him it had been a case of religious duty against political tradition, and religion won.

Leadership

For the most part the country districts are without wise and public-spirited leaders. There are some splendid exceptions to this and the influence of certain men could be very clearly seen in the vigorous condition of three of the farmers' union locals, and the excellent condition of the schools in the same neighborhoods. A fine monument to the devotion and self-sacrifice of a little group of men under the leadership of a country doctor is to be found in Laneview College, the most interesting school in the county. Two of these four neighborhoods have vigorous community churches. Leadership is also shown in the formation of the Fruit-growers' Association and the original spread of the Farmers' Unions through the county.

Social and Economic Standards

There is unquestionable difference between the different neighborhoods in this respect. Some seemed to have a fine democratic spirit, with little

or no class distinctions, while in others class lines were sharply drawn among the young people and the older people as well. As a rule those communities where there are no negroes, are one-standard communities, where everybody who is at all decent is at home with everybody else. Class distinctions are most strictly observed in the neighborhoods where the larger slave-holders lived before the War and where the negroes are still much in evidence. These class distinctions are based partly on moral worth, partly on family, partly on wealth and partly on culture. A few of the better educated and more well-to-do country families seem to associate preferably with the town people.

Social Life

Of good wholesome social life there is much right in connection with the farmer's everyday work. Picking cotton, threshing wheat, killing hogs, are occasions for friends and neighbors to get together. The practice of trading work is still common here. It is also the custom for whole families to work together out in the cotton fields.

Besides these incidental forms of association there are other forms of social life. These differ widely in the different districts, depending chiefly upon the number of young people and the amount of initiative and leadership present among them. In some neighborhoods the young

ONE OF THE OCCASIONS WHEN FARMERS GET TOGETHER

people complain that things are dead; in others there seems to be too much society. Generally there are two or three parties a month during the fall and winter, and a few picnics during the spring and summer. Most of these parties are held in the homes. The Sunday evening church service is also a time for the young people to get together and these evening services are usually better attended than the morning services. Dancing and card-playing are frowned on in the country and are rarely indulged in, but in the towns a livelier pace is set. For the married women in the country the opportunities for meeting friends are, as usual, limited.

Amusements and Recreation

Aside from the parties and the picnics and the buggy rides and the games played at school, there are few recreations in the country. Of baseball, football, basket-ball, amateur theatricals, there is nothing. In the towns some baseball is played and moving picture shows are popular, Trenton and Milan have picture shows most of the year and Humboldt has two or three. Each of them is well patronized. The investigator dropped in twice and each time counted over two hundred present, including many children. The shows themselves are harmless, although the themes are often inane. In the smaller towns the shows come in for shorter periods, from a month to one or two nights, depending upon the amount of patronage.

Fraternal Organizations

Table XII shows the membership and the number of lodges of the different fraternal organizations in Gibson County.

TABLE XII.—MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE OF FRATERNAL ORDERS

Name	No Lodges	Member-ship	Total No. Meeting per Month	Total Monthly Attend-ance
Odd Fellows	12	855	32	730
Masons	15	712	16	288
M. W. A.	16	808	25	380
K. of P.	4	240	10	190
W. of W.	14	1,067	20	500
Elks	1	125	...	....
Eastern Star	4	142	5	96
Total	66	3,949	110	2,184

Average attendance per meeting, 19.8.

It is to be noted that nearly half the membership is in orders in which insurance is an important feature, and these orders are the most largely

represented among the country people. Out of 419 farmers about whom inquiries were made, only 99, or 23.6 per cent., belonged to any lodge, and the majority of these belonged to one of the orders of Woodmen. The conclusion would be, therefore, that while the lodge plays an important part in the social life of some of the farmers, it does not vitally affect the great mass of them. The Farmers' Union, which has already been mentioned, is a social as well as a business organization, and is really much more influential than the lodges among the country people. Unfortunately, however, it is on the decline.

Of open organizations or clubs there are a few in the towns but none in the country.

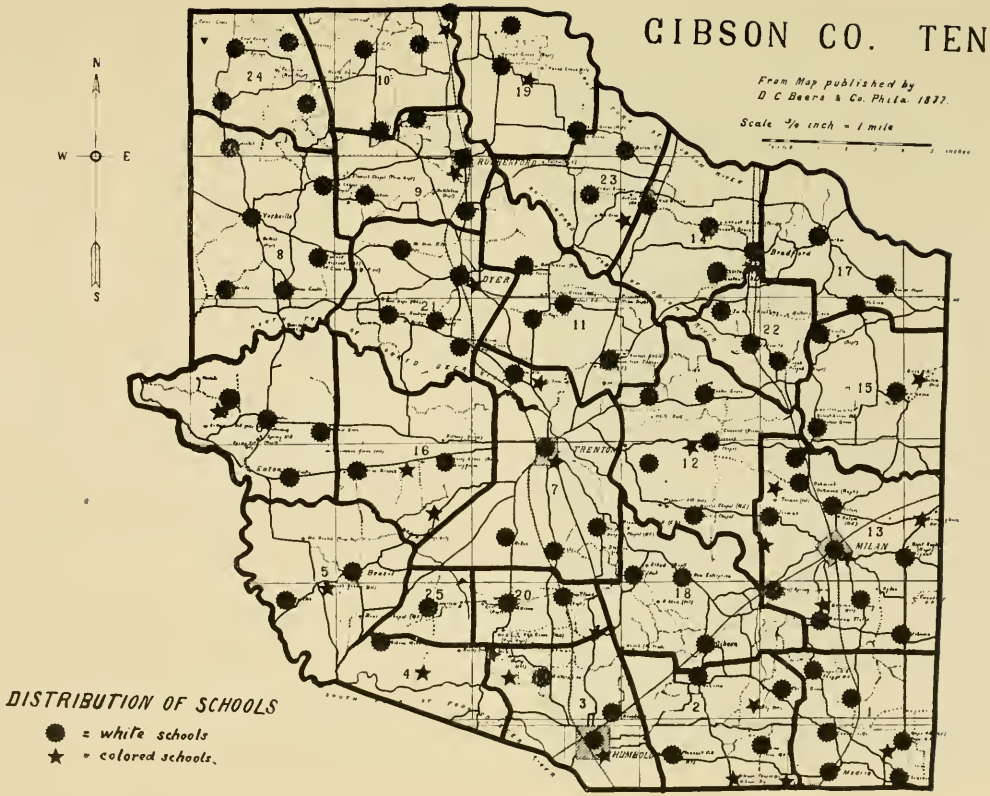
The social life of the negroes is, of course, absolutely distinct from that of the whites. They are by nature a sociable people. They like to live together and work together. Their drift toward the town is largely due to the tendency to congregate. Their social life centers around the lodge and the church. Even in the open country you often find their lodge hall side by side with the church, and in the towns they have many different lodges. These lodge halls are the scenes of many dances and receptions. The church is really no less important as a social center than the lodge and on meeting days they drive 8 or 10 miles to attend service.

SCHOOLS

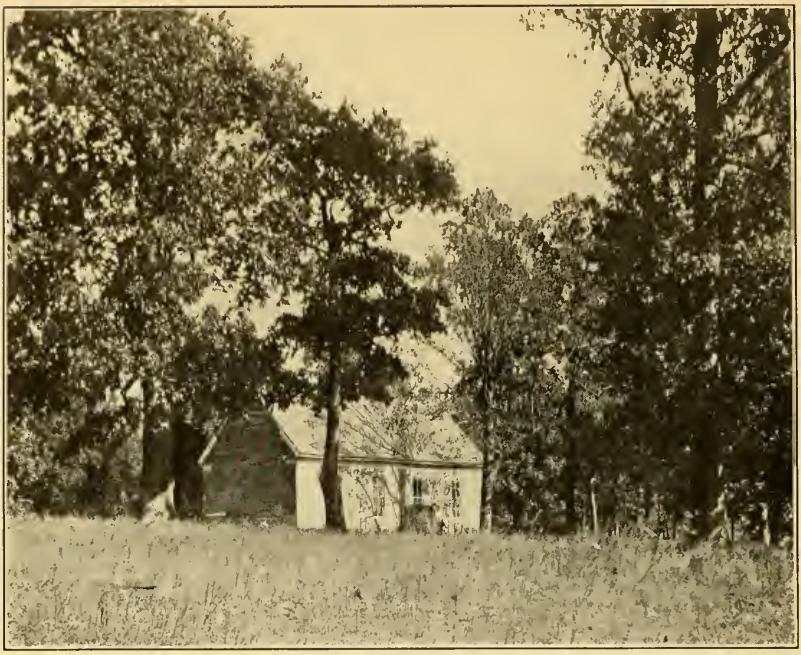
Gibson County has adopted the new County Board system of school management, and is, therefore, among the more progressive of the Tennessee counties. According to this system the county and not the district surrounding each school is the unit. The control of all the country schools is vested in a board of five men, who, with the county superintendent, determine the various schools districts, apportion the school funds and fix the teachers' salaries. These are determined according to the enrollment. The plan works well, although there is opposition to it in certain quarters. It is said that it takes away the old sense of responsibility on the part of the people and is less economical. The people will not board the teachers at special rates and will not provide wood and make repairs as they did under the old system. In two cases where the county board refused to authorize the erection of schools which were clearly unnecessary, the opposition went so far as to build a school house independently. In one case a little hamlet of 160 people took out a city charter in order to establish a new school of its own.

There are in all 135 schools in the county, 97 white and 38 colored. Of these, 11 white schools and 6 colored schools are in the towns. The rest are country schools. Map No. 5 shows the distribution of schools.

An important feature of the school system is the division of the country schools into "primary" and "secondary." Forty-eight are


GIBSON CO. TENN.
From Map published by
D. C. Beers & Co. Phila. 1877.
Scale 3/4 inch = 1 mile
N
W
E
S
DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS
= white schools
= colored schools.
TRENTON
MILAN
HUMBOLDT
DYER

MAP NO. V



A ONE-ROOM PRIMARY SCHOOL

classed as secondary and forty-two as primary. The primary school is a school that teaches nothing beyond the Fifth Grade. It is always a one-room school, taught by one teacher. These schools are maintained because of the greater difficulty which the younger children would have in going the longer distances to and from school. The secondary school teaches all grades as high as the Eighth Grade and over, including some high-school courses. With two or three teachers it is possible to secure much more efficient teaching and in most cases they have introduced special courses in music and elocution.

Of these secondary schools 28 have 2, 10 have 3 and 1 has 4 rooms. In no case is there transportation of the pupils. Gibson County has no real "consolidated schools."

The country schools are all frame structures. Some of them are attractive in appearance and well kept up, but for the most part there is room for improvement. Out of 17 schools inspected, 10 are situated in attractive groves and the rest have trees planted around them. The condition of three of the buildings may be classed as good, of nine fair and of five poor. Of these same schools 1 has a blackboard of slate, 3 of hyloplate, 1 of cloth and the rest of wood. Four of 12 schools have no water supply. The sanitary arrangements are much neglected. Out of 16 schools inspected 7 have 2 privies, 7 have only 1, and 2 have none

A THREE-ROOM SECONDARY SCHOOL

at all. Of the buildings themselves 1 may be classed as good, 1 as fair, 3 as poor and the rest wretched. The total value of the school property is reported at $170,000.

The assessed valuation of Gibson County is $8,680,000. The county school levy is 30 cents, and the State school levy 15 cents on the $100 valuation. Besides these sources of revenue the schools receive the poll taxes of $2 each, the revenue from the special privilege tax, and the interest from certain school funds. The total expenditure this year was $73,582. Of this amount $60,000 in round numbers went for teachers' salaries, $3,500 for new buildings, repairs and equipment, $270 for school libraries and $124 for charts and globes. Table XIII gives some of the important data concerning teachers and pupils.

TABLE XIII.—PUPILS AND TEACHERS. NUMBER, SALARY, COST OF TUITION

	White		Colored	
	Country	Towns	Country	Towns
Pupils enrolled	6,641	1,904	1,504	786
Per capita cost of tuition	$5.77	$10.00*	$3.11	..
No. teachers	137	70	27	13
No. pupils per teacher	43	27	56	60
Average salary per month	$45.50	$52.00†	$31.52	..

* Figures for previous year.
† General average for White and Colored teachers, both

The data for the town schools is lacking in some cases because the town schools are not under the county board of education and the county

superintendent has no authority to make the town superintendents send in their reports.

Attention should be called to the higher per capita expenditure for town pupils than for country pupils, also to the lower number of pupils per teacher in the town schools, together with the higher salaries paid there.

Attention should also be called to the low expenditure for the colored pupils and to the excessively high number of pupils per teacher.

There are six circulating libraries among the country schools, with a total of 600 volumes, and seven such libraries in the town schools, with a total of 900 volumes. These libraries are paid for partly by the community, through basket dinners and socials, and partly by the State, under the new school library law.

A few of the schools make an effort to provide playgrounds. The investigator came across one country school with basketball grounds and one with croquet grounds. Usually, however, such facilities are lacking. There is occasionally a social or entertainment in the schools, but the school buildings are not important social centers. They do serve, however, as meeting places for most of the Farmers' Unions.

Most of the schools teach a little agriculture and nature study, but no domestic science or manual training. Most of the secondary schools have music and some have elocution. Some of them have special music rooms. The music and elocution teachers are paid by private subscription and by tuition fees.

In some of the schools the regular appropriation for school purposes is supplemented by private subscriptions, making possible a longer term of school and the employment of better teachers. It is in these cases that leadership and community spirit are most in evidence. Schools whose income was supplemented in this way were found in the communities which have the really live Farmers' Unions.

The most interesting of all the country schools is the Laneview College. This school is supported partly by county funds, partly by tuition fees and partly by direct subscription from the community. The people of the community—and it is not a wealthy community—dig down into their pockets and pay out $800 a year for its support. In their devotion to the school and in the sacrifices they have made for it, they have built up an unusually fine community spirit. Hand in hand with the school has gone the church. The Baptist Church in that community, the one to which most of the people belong, is the only country church in the county that has a resident minister, and is one of the two that has preaching more than one-fourth of the time. Results like this indicate the presence of a persevering, self-sacrificing leader. This man we found here, a fine country doctor, where work has been splendidly seconded by loyal friends.

WHAT ONE COUNTRY NEIGHBORHOOD HAS DONE

SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH AT LANEVIEW

LANEVIEW SCHOOL

BAPTIST PARSONAGE AT LANEVIEW

DORMITORY AT LANEVIEW SCHOOL

The school itself, while giving degrees under a State charter, is really an academy. It has done some excellent work, but from the standpoint of the country life enthusiast it has this fault—it has taken the boys and girls from the farm and labored to teach them Latin, Greek, elocution and music. It has made of them doctors, lawyers, teachers and ministers —anything but farmers. It has trained them for the stiff collar instead of the flannel shirt.

CHURCHES

There are 179 churches in Gibson County, all but one of them Protestant. Of these 134 are white and 45 are colored. This means that there is one white church to every 224 white people and one colored church to every 210 colored people. If the white churches were evenly distributed there would be one church to every 4.8 square miles. The overcrowding of churches is shown strikingly in Map No. 6.

Nearly all of the country churches and half of the town churches are served by non-resident ministers, as is shown in Table XV.

TABLE XV.—CHURCHES WITH RESIDENT MINISTERS

	Churches with Resident Pastors	Churches with Absentee Preachers
Town	22	22
Country	2	80

Table XVI shows the number of preaching services per month in the town churches and in the country churches.

TABLE XVI.—PREACHING SERVICES PER MONTH

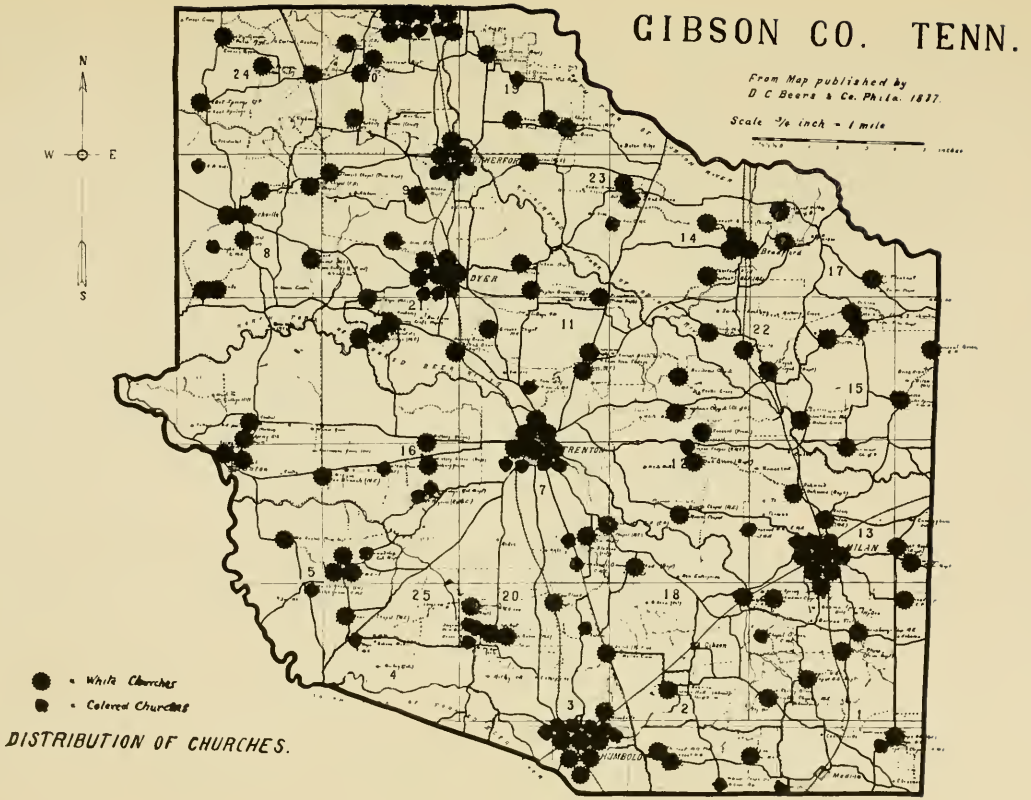
	Full Time	Three-fourths Time	Half Time	Fourth Time	Irregular
Town	10	1	18	13	2
Country	..	.	2	74	6

Of the 134 white churches 47 are in the towns and 87 in the country. Of the colored churches 20 are in the towns and 25 in the country. The record of the white churches for the last 10 years is shown in Table XVII.

TABLE XVII.—RECORD OF CHURCHES FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS

Class	Town No.	Town P. C.	Country No.	Country P. C.
Growing	23	49%	28	32%
Stationary	4	9%	14	16%
Losing	10	21%	17	20%
Dying	1	2%	8	9%
Dead	1	2%	6	7%
Organized within 10 years	8	17%	14	16%
Total	47		87	

MAP NO. VI



DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES.

These figures show that the town churches are growing more rapidly than the country churches, in spite of the fact that the population of both town and country has increased about equally. Apparently the tendency to concentrate the church work in the towns and neglect the country fields is present also in Gibson County.

Membership

The total membership of the white town churches is 5,600 and of the white country churches 6,900; that of the colored town churches is 1,573 and of the colored country churches 1,808. The total church membership, therefore, is 15,880, or 38 per cent. of the entire population.

The total number of accessions during the past church year in the white churches is 536 for the town churches, an increase of 9.6 per cent., and 578 for the country, an increase of 8.4 per cent.

The church relation of 317 young people who have grown up in country neighborhoods in the last ten years and are now between 20 and 30 years old, is shown in Table XVIII.

TABLE XVIII.—CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY YEARS OLD IN THE COUNTRY

	Total Number	Church Members	Not Church Members
Boys	200	45%	55%
Girls	117	75%	25%

The church attendance of the young people is shown in Table XIX.

TABLE XIX.—CHURCH ATTENDANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY YEARS OLD

	Total Number	Per Centage Attending		
		Well	Occasionally	None
Boys	127	61.4	19	19.6
Girls	110	81	15	4.

These figures emphasize the generally recognized difference between the religious susceptibility of boys and girls.

A study of 484 white country families showed that 72 per cent. of the heads of these families were church members. It showed further that 57 per cent. attended church well (*i.e.*, more than 75 per cent. of the preaching days), 21.5 attended church occasionally, while 21.5 per cent. did not attend at all. Diagram No. 2 shows the church attendance of heads of families arranged according to the degree of wealth. In the diagram the width of each block indicates the proportionate number of men represented in it and the length represents the percentage of church attendance.

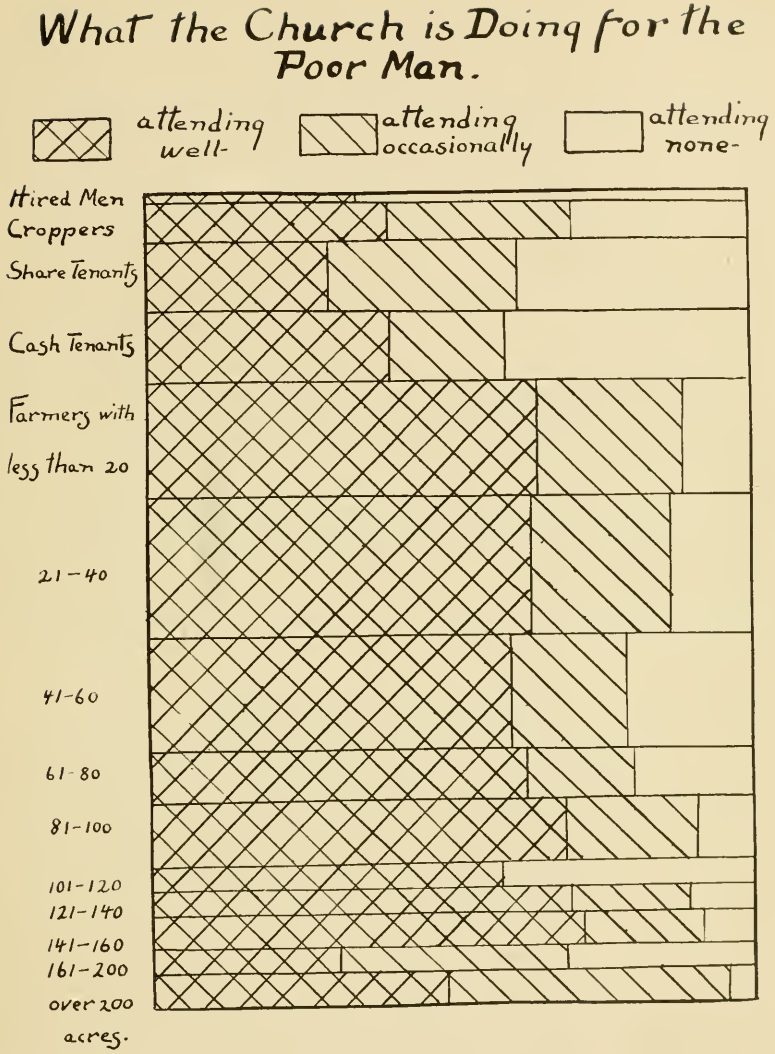


DIAGRAM NO. II

It will be seen that the bulk of the church membership is of the more well-to-do families and that the poorer families are not so apt to belong.

Sunday School

Among the 82 white country churches there are 61 which have Sunday Schools. The others either have none or else in a few cases hold a Union Sunday-school with some other church. In many of the country Sunday-schools the session lasts only six months. The total enrollment for the

white town churches is 4,029, for the country churches 3,412. The average attendance is roughly about 60 per cent. of the enrollment in both town and country. Out of 2,949 enrolled in the town schools 1,111 are adults, 1,083 are children, and 755 are young people between 15 and 21 years old. Of 2,228 enrolled in the country 656 are adults, 872 are children 14 or under, and 700 are young people. There are 237 teachers in the towns and 191 in the country. Only one Sunday-school was found in which regular teachers' meetings were held, and only one in which the graded lessons were used.

Church Property

The total value of the church property is estimated at $340,000, which is just twice the valuation of the school property. Of the total valuation $210,000 is invested in the white town churches, $95,000 in the white country churches, $15,000 in colored country churches and $20,000 in colored town churches. The country churches are generally one-room buildings situated in a grove or surrounded by planted trees. The average seating capacity is slightly less than 200. They are usually heated by wood stoves and lighted by oil lamps. They are as a rule kept up better than the schools. Many of them have cemeteries in connection with them.

Church Budget

The total expenditure last year for all church purposes was $63,140, almost as much as that for schools. Of this amount $34,600 was paid out by the white town churches, $20,524 by the white country churches, and $8,000 by the colored churches. Of this amount 52 per cent. went to pay the ministers. The average country church pays its minister $108 a year and the average town church $455 a year.

The Ministers

There are 33 white and 10 colored ministers living in the County. Of the white ministers 22 are resident town pastors. The other eleven preach wherever they can get work. Usually they have three or four churches and in a few cases as many as five. Of the resident pastors ten give full time to one church. The rest divide their time between two or three churches. In addition to the ministers living within the county there are 14 students from neighboring colleges who do supply work here. Five country ministers are also farmers, three are teachers. The highest salary paid is $1,800 and seven of the thirty-three receive over $1,000. The salaries of the rest will hardly average over $700.

Most of these men secured their education at neighboring colleges and academies. Only seven of them have had seminary training.

Do We Need Them All?

173 Churches in Gibson County, Tenn.

One White Church to every 4.8 square miles and to every 248 people.

One Colored Church to every 210 people.

NEEDED!

Trained Religious Leaders for the Country Communities *in Gibson County, Tenn.*

82 White Country Churches

2 have resident Ministers

80 are without resident Ministers

2 have preaching half time

80 have preaching fourth time

Not one has preaching every Sunday.

Their libraries will average about 200 volumes and are chiefly theological and homiletical books.

Sectarianism

Table XX shows the names and the membership of the different religious bodies.

TABLE XX.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS BODIES—WHITE

Denomination	Town		Country	
	No.	Total Mem'ship	No.	Total Mem'ship
Baptist	10	1,950	22	2,709
Methodist	11	1,952	23	1,956
Cumberland Presbyterian	9	676	12	1,023
Disciples	9	483	10	542
Southern Presbyterian	3	265	4	185
Presbyterian, U. S. A.	3	202	0	0
Catholic	1	50	0	0
Episcopalian	1	10	0	0
Christian Science	1	15	0	0
Primitive Baptist	..	....	8	321
F. W. Baptist	..	....	2	100
Methodist Protestant	..	....	1	50
Holiness	..	....	1	20
Adventist	..	....	1	30

Attention should be called to the strength of the Baptist and the Methodist bodies and the "Anti-Unionist" Cumberland Presbyterians.

There is often a good deal of interchurch attendance and the churches have stood together splendidly in the great prohibition campaign—a splendid augury for the future—but for the most part the different denominations are rivals. Instead of coöperating they are competing with each other; and the founding of 33 new churches within the last 10 years in this already badly overchurched region shows how little they understand the common cause for which all churches exist. The investigator could see little hope for any scheme of church federation in the near future. The attitude of a very large proportion of the church members is well summed up in the reply of a member of one of the four Trezevant churches to the suggestion that perhaps some time these churches could get together and support a resident pastor on full time. This man appeared startled and replied with some heat, "Not so long as I have any breath in my body."

The most unfortunate situation exists here as a result of the Cumberland Union. This union undertaken to solve the difficult overchurching problem, has failed of its purpose in this county. Instead of fewer and stronger churches the result has been more and weaker churches. Be-

RIVALS—TWO COLORED CHURCHES SIDE BY SIDE IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

fore the union there were twenty Cumberland churches in the county and there are still twenty. Each of the three "U. S. A." churches is the result of a split which has generated in many cases the bitterest of feeling.

The Power of the Church

Throughout this region the church is strongly entrenched in the affections of the people. The church together with the school is the great institution of the country people and their interest in the church and in religion is deep and genuine.

There is little hostility to the church and there are few in these country neighborhoods who do not believe in the church and in Christianity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gibson County, Tennessee, is shown in this survey to be a fine farming country, with unusual promise for the future. When this survey is read there is very little left of the common complaints which we hear about country life. The population is contented in the country. Those who go away to the cities are not too many in number. There is a measure of leadership in the country and there is a diversity of occupation to interest and employ the people. A wholesome variety of crops is raised and last of all, the people of the county manufacture a great deal of their own products.

The Townward Drift

Record of White Churches for the last Ten Years in Gibson County, Tennessee

47 Town Churches		*87 Country Churches*
49%	Growing	32%
9%	Stationary	16%
21%	Losing	20%
2%	Dying	9%
2%	Dead	7%
17%	Organized within Ten Years	16%

CHART V.

The first thing to recommend, therefore, is that Gibson County maintain the ground it has and improve in these very particulars. Churches and schools must take warning from the ill condition of other regions which have lost very many of their people, from the closing down of country industries, the indifference to country people's needs, the neglect of social life and the exhaustion of the soil. If the churches in Gibson County desire to maintain their influence, they must keep their people around them. To keep their people they must teach that the soil is sacred. They must praise the farmer who fertilizes and who improves the rotation of crops, who keeps cattle, who plants clover and who in other words is a farmer for the future as well as for the present. The

churches must teach the iniquity of speculation in land and the fact that the farmer who has made only cash has failed.

Second. The ministers in Gibson County, however, are not helping the farmer to stay in the country, because they themselves are moving into town. This was not so in former times. The old-fashioned preacher used to live with the farmer. There were no towns in those days. The modern preacher has nothing for the farmer but a sermon. Three hours a month is the stint he gives for the pay he gets. Of course he comes out to a few weddings and funerals, but sermons and marriages and burials are a dismal kind of religion. The minister if he is going to bring the people in Gibson County into the Lord's ways must live with them and walk with them in those ways himself. His wife will then be of more use in the country, perhaps, than he will be, and certainly she will be of more use to the people in the country than she is now when she lives in the town. His children will have religious value if his home is with country people; for they too have children.

The churches of all denominations are alike in desertion of the country by their preachers. How can the minister teach anything but an absentee religion when he lives an absentee life? He talks of course about Heaven and Hell and Palestine, none of which the farmer has ever seen. The Bible men talked about a holy land in which they lived with their people, about cows and mules and camels, about grasshoppers and storms and about rent, about ownership of land and other things that are in the country.

For the country churches to have pastors they must pay the bill. Two or three country churches must be grouped together. This country is full of Baptist Churches. It would be a blessing to Gibson County if three Baptist Churches could be grouped together withing driving distance of one another to support a pastor living among his people. The *Home Field* says, "There are thousands of country churches in the South that could easily employ a pastor for two Sundays in the month and two of these churches by forming a field would find no trouble in providing a comfortable support for the pastor. There are hundreds and hundreds of country churches in the South that could easily support a pastor for his whole time." We believe that any christian living in such a neighborhood should give his support to such a Baptist pastor in the country, because no greater help could be given to a country community than the service of a wise and devoted pastor living with his people. The problem of country life for all people in Gibson County will be greatly affected by such rural ministry.

Third. We commend to the attention of Christian folk in Gibson County that the churches of all denominations in this county are failing to get hold of the men and the young men of the county. It is a bad

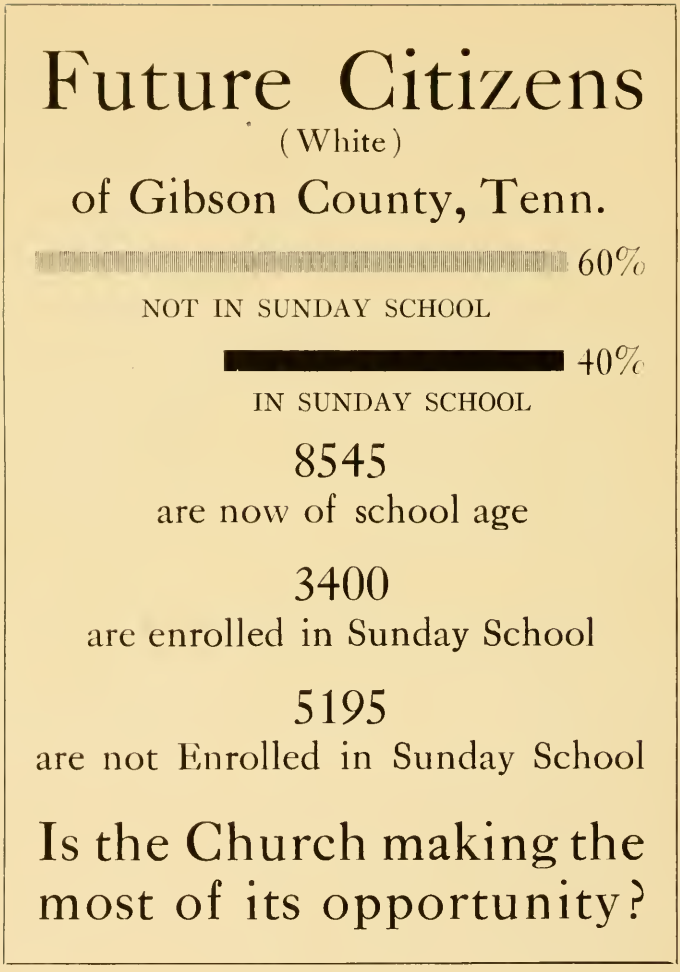


CHART VI.

thing for a church, and it a very serious thing for all churches, to fail to interest the men. Men are not any more wicked than women and true religion has just as much hold on a man as on a woman. But the men have a harder strain upon them in supporting the family. They have more things to contend with outside the home. The kind of religion that interests a man is religion that helps him to be a good farmer, a good citizen, a good man among men. He has to use his religion the same week. He cannot afford a religion that must be kept in storage for use in another place or another world. He is not a dreamer. He has to be practical.

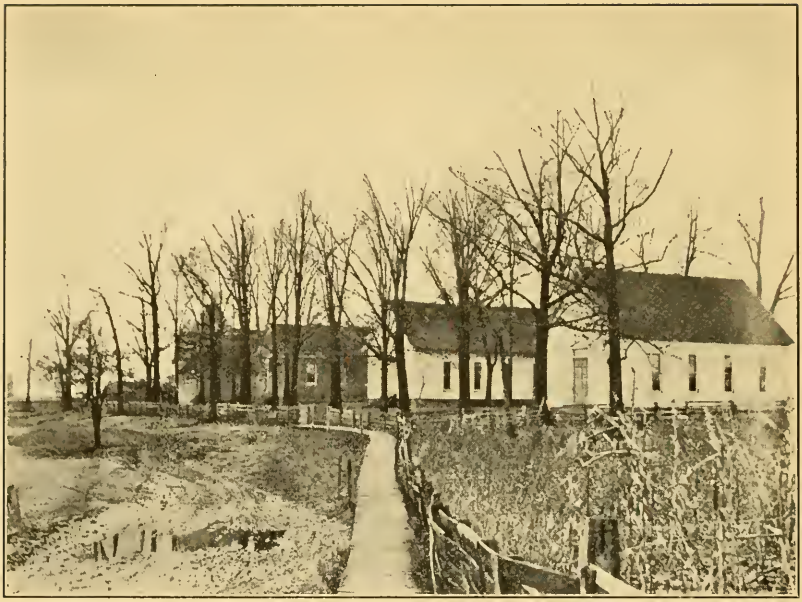
We suggest two lines of interest for country churches. Both of these

are meant to help men and young men live the life they must live. First of all the church ought to make the farmer a good farmer. It ought to study his needs and help to satisfy them. The preacher ought to talk the language of the country. He ought to know the events of the week. He ought to be able to "heal the hurt of the people." The minister will be greatly helped in this if occasionally the church is open for a lecture on good farming. It puts things in the right light if good farming and good Gospel are made one, as they are in the Old Testament.

Furthermore, the young men of the community are interested in the play life. They will soon get over it, but for the time being they think more about play than about work. This is not wicked on their part; it is natural, and they will soon get to be sober and staid enough; that too is natural. While they are young they ought to have encouragement from the church. The women of the churches feel this; and attempt to give some social life to the community, but the men are generally against it. The church ought to be open, and the homes of the people ought to be open, regularly, for social opportunities that will enable the young people to work off their steam, to get acquainted; and to feel that the older people, and the leaders of the church especially, are their friends. It will do a great deal to cultivate good sense among the young and good feeling among all, if religious people take the lead in providing recreation and social life for the young people of the community. It is another way of getting the church in the right place as a leading organization for the good things in the community. Everything that is good is dear to the Lord and ought to be upheld by God's people.

Fourth. The survey shows that the people of this county believe in organization among country people. A wise old farmer in Iowa, who knows the people of the country generally, says: "What the farmer needs is organization." The farmers' union and the fruit-growers association are serious attempts on the part of the farmers to organize and they should not be allowed to fail. We have no interest in these unions, but we believe that the farmer should be organized in the interest of getting a better income, for the purpose of taking care of his own business and for the protection of his home and his community against the big organizations which threaten him from without. The lesson of working together for the common good, of subordinating our own interests to the welfare of all, is the most important of Christian teachings, and we believe, therefore that the churches of Gibson County ought to lend encouragement to these attempts at coöperation.

The duty of coöperation among farmers ought to be taught in gatherings of church people, not necessarily on Sunday, but on the days of the week. At picnics, on social occasions and at other times the church ought to make very plain its support of the leadership of farmers among



"FOUR IN A ROW." ALL OF THEM ARE CHURCHES. THREE OF THEM HAVE PREACHING ONCE A MONTH AND ONE HAS PREACHING TWICE A MONTH AND THERE IS NO RESIDENT MINISTER IN THE TOWN

farmers and the loyalty of every farmer to his own leaders. The great lesson to be taught by the country church is that of obedience not merely to great leaders who are dead, but to living leaders of today. It will be a good thing for the country churches when farmers learn to coöperate in buying and selling and in manufacturing their own products, for it will train them in obedience, in loyalty, in truth, in honorable action, in responsibility and chief of all will train leaders among farmers, the need of whom at the present time is the greatest need in the country.

Fifth. We recommend that the schools in Gibson County devote more attention to training men for the work they will have to do. Farming is now coming to be a learned profession. We are beginning to see how noble and dignified farming may be made. Behind the tiller of the soil are learned men investigating in chemistry, in physics, in physiology, in botany. Some day the common farm hand, the careless negro or renter may till the soil under learned instructions. This is coming to pass already. The farmer is the botanist. He is the man who practices the lessons about chemistry which learned men discover in their secret laboratories.

Now the common school ought to teach to the ordinary boy and girl who never go to any other school these lessons and this learning.

This kind of a school is homely and this seems like common talk, but there is needed much more common sense and much less learned nonsense in the common schools in order that the ordinary boy and girl may stay longer in the school than the fourth grade.

Sixth. We recommend that there is needed in Gibson County a great Sunday-school movement. The Sunday-schools of the county are very weak, especially in the country. There is a big difference between the number of children in the town Sunday-schools and the number of children in the country Sunday-schools. In the town schools more than five-sevenths of the children are in the Sunday-school; in the country, less than one-fourth. Not all the country churches have Sunday-schools, though, of course, we recognize that about twelve of them are doctrinally opposed to the Sunday school and about eight of them are dying.

But the study of the Bible by the young under the leadership of grown folks of good sense and of devout spirit is the best religious training the church can give. It is even better than preaching. Throughout the whole country most of the membership of the churches were converted during the Sunday-school years, from fourteen to eighteen years. It would be the greatest possible blessing to Gibson County if in all the churches of all denominations the leaders would build up the Sunday-school, going after the children that do not attend, organizing them in classes and teaching all the lessons of religion and morality while their minds are open and their characters are being formed.

Seventh. We recommend, therefore, that Gibson County organize no more churches. It has too many churches already. When somebody proposes to build a new church let someone else say, "Stop! Would it not be better to build rooms for the Sunday-school children?" Only 1,572 children are in the country Sunday-schools, but in the day schools there are 6,641. Something should be done to get these country children under the teaching and training of the grown folks who are so generally in the churches. If these young people are going to be kept in the country, they must come to respect their elders, and learn to love them. Not all parents are good teachers of religion. The Holy Spirit has not made every man a teacher, even though he be a father. Not every mother who can bring children into the world can bring them into the Kingdom. Only a few men and women in every community are able to teach. The Sunday-school gives these few an opportunity.

We recommend a building movement in the country churches in Gibson County in which there shall be rooms erected for the teaching of religion. Upon every country church should be built several rooms large and small. There should be one room for a Bible class where some Godly man of mature years and devout spirit shall teach the men and women the deep lessons of the spirit. Then there should be a room for

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the boys in their teens; another room for the girls in their teens, where each should have a teacher of their own, wise and warm-hearted, who will take up the great lessons about the heroes of the Bible and teach them to the young while their minds are open to these stories. There should be also a room for boys and girls where several classes might be taught. In this instance the teachers may be young men and women not so wise nor so mature in judgment as the few great teachers in the school, but sensible and good and knowing the Bible. Then there should be a room for the little children where no one else shall come in to disturb and where a Godly woman of leadership and with a tender heart for the young shall preside.

The church of whatever denomination that builds a building like this will do great service to the whole country side. All christian people, even if they cannot agree to the doctrines of that church, ought to give their money to support it, ought to worship with its people and pray for its success, for that church will be the social center. It will be the neighborhood church and it will help every other church within ten miles by the success and the spiritual service which shall be within its walls.

Eighth. The pressing necessity of Gibson County is a new kind of school. There should be established at the best point in the County, for farmers to attend it, a school for grown-up folks, where no one under eighteen years should be admitted, and no one over fifty should be rejected. It should be a religious school, full of the sound of hymns and beginning every class with prayer. The teaching should be about farming, and the scholars should be country people, who have farms or are working on farms. The courses should be short, each person being expected to stay no more than six months. A man or woman can learn a great deal in six months, if he has a farm or a country home to practice on.

The teachers in this school must be trained men and women, as good as are at the University, but they must not try to make their scholars too learned. They are to train farmers, not to make professors. Therefore they ought to use few books and many examples. When they talk about trees, they ought to draw a tree on the board and talk about it for a while, then take the class out in the orchard and show what they are talking about, on an actual tree. When they talk about butter, instead of a book about butter, they ought to have cream and a churn and salt right there, and make butter before the class.

This kind of a school will make Christian farmers, who will stay in the country. If we can keep our church people in the country, we can keep up the churches that are there. If the farmers prosper and are happy there, we will have preachers to live with them. If the schools will turn their hand to making good farmers, there will be no great trouble about maintaining the churches in the country.

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